





## Multidisciplinary



my students to leave when the bell rang. I knew this was one site I wanted to share with other teachers.

In addition to teaching, I conduct staff development workshops for teachers in my district, and I include Wordle in many training sessions. Usually we create a word cloud with the Declaration of Independence or a piece of literature. It never ceases to amaze me how Wordle just clicks with so many teachers, no matter what their level of technology is. Teachers usually leave my workshop and, out of all of the sites I cover, start using Wordle first.

One of the social studies teachers in my school always asked her students to create interesting covers for their reports. She likes to encourage creativity, but some students complained that they could not draw, and they hated that part of the assignment.

The teacher's technology skills were not that strong, but she had heard about Wordle. She gave them the option of copying and pasting their reports into Wordle, selecting layout and color, and using that as the cover. Many of her students decided to try it.

One student put her report into Wordle and saw that *also* appeared as the largest word, indicating that it was the most frequently used. She showed it to her teacher and said, "I guess I use *also* too much." The teacher made a lesson out of it, and now the students are much more aware of the word choices they make.

This teacher now uses Wordle with all of her students, and it has become a word-variety self-assessment tool.

One language arts teacher decided to play around with Wordle by using excerpts from literature. She found texts on sites such as the University of Virginia's eBook Library, printed them, and displayed them in her classroom. She didn't teach with them, but soon the students started asking about the word clouds. She demonstrated to her students how the Wordles can point out the important stuff about characters, theme, etc. Students could also use them to find repetitive words. She said that because the images are so visually appealing, kids are drawn to them and they are more engaged in the text.

Wordle is much more than just a way to create pretty pictures with words. It is a great visualization tool that can become a catalyst for discussion and insight. It is about understanding and discovering patterns in text and generating conversations among students and teachers.

### Resources

Our Documents: [www.ourdocuments.gov/index.php?flash=false&](http://www.ourdocuments.gov/index.php?flash=false&)

University of Virginia's eBook Library:

<http://etext.lib.virginia.edu/ebooks>

Wordle: [www.wordle.net](http://www.wordle.net)

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Samantha Morra was the winner of L&L's Web 2.0 essay contest, for which we asked teachers how they use Web 2.0 tools, such as blogs, social networks, and wikis, to teach or engage students. To read the other submissions, visit [www.iste-community.org/group/landl](http://www.iste-community.org/group/landl).